

Mr. President, Sharon Daly is retiring from Catholic Charities USA. She will be deeply missed for her thoughtful guidance and leadership. I have confidence, however, that she will remain an inspiration to those who will follow in her footsteps.

#### TEEN DRIVER SAFETY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during the recent district work period, I read a front-page Chicago Tribune news article that reminded me of the importance of educating young adults about driving safety. And as students in Gibson City, IL, can tell you, the story is also a testament to what can be achieved through dedication, perseverance, and heart.

Summer can be a dangerous time for teen drivers, many of whom are just beginning to build their experience behind the wheel. In my home State of Illinois, July is the deadliest month for teen drivers. An average of 12 Illinois teens have been killed in car accidents every July for the last 10 years. We must work to prevent these tragic losses by educating America's teenage drivers about driver safety.

The Tribune article highlighted the story of the Arends family, of Gibson City, IL, who have turned an unimaginably heartbreaking tragedy into a successful campaign to save the lives of teen drivers. Three and a half years ago, 17-year-old twins Greg and Steve Arends were driving to work when Greg, the driver, lost control of the car, which slammed sideways into a telephone pole at 80 miles per hour. Neither boy was under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and both boys' seatbelts were fastened, but unfortunately, Greg's side of the vehicle bore the impact of the crash, and he died at the hospital. Miraculously, his twin brother Steve survived, thanks in part to wearing a seatbelt.

A year and a half after the accident, despite their immense pain and grief, the Arends family responded to a call from Judy Weber-Jones, a teacher at the local high school, who asked if they would be willing to help launch a teen driver safety campaign in Gibson City. They agreed, and Steve Arends even decided to participate in presentations for his peers. His is a powerful message, and it is already making a difference in the lives of teens in Gibson City. Though the accident left Steve with injuries that he is still trying to overcome, he has displayed great courage in sharing his unfortunate experience with his peers in Central Illinois.

Over the last year and a half, the campaign at Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School, called Project Ignition—License to Live, has grown to attract the participation of dozens of students and community volunteers. The Arends family has allowed students to place pictures of Greg around the school and gave the group a picture of the car mangled in the accident. Roadside signs erected all over town read "Slow

Down. Buckle Up. Remember Greg and Steve." Students have staged mock car accidents and organized demonstrations with crash simulators. The group has also produced videos, PowerPoint presentations, and public service announcements aimed at increasing seatbelt use, reducing speeding, and promoting safe driving practices among teens.

I commend the Arends family, Ms. Weber-Jones, and all those who collaborate with the Project Ignition—License to Live program for their work to save the lives of young drivers in Illinois. The campaign's success has been remarkable.

Since the start of the Project Ignition—License to Live program, seatbelt use among teens at Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School has increased at least 20 percent, the number of speeding tickets issued to teens has decreased by more than 70 percent, and the number of accidents reported to local police departments has dropped by more than half. This program is indeed saving lives. Six teens were involved in car accidents this past school year, and in all six cases, the teens were wearing their seatbelts and walked away with only minor injuries.

So what is Project Ignition—License to Live doing differently than other teen driver safety programs? In just a short time, this program has been able to achieve levels of improvement in teen driver safety and accident prevention that parents, teachers, law enforcement, and other leaders have not been able to accomplish in decades. The most notable difference is that this program is fueled by teens themselves. They have found a way to package messages about wearing seatbelts, slowing down, and staying alert that truly resonate among their peers. Theirs is a model that I believe should be replicated across the Nation.

The SAFETEA highway and transit bill that Congress passed 1 year ago included a provision to reward States that have passed strong primary seatbelt laws. Such laws allow law enforcement officials to stop, ticket, and fine drivers for not wearing a seatbelt. My home State of Illinois is one of those States that have already passed a primary seatbelt law. In 2006, Illinois will receive a one-time payment of \$30 million in Federal funds authorized by SAFETEA. I commend Illinois for not only passing a primary seatbelt law that will save lives but also for dedicating all of the \$30 million to highway safety programs. I recently sent a letter to Governor Blagojevich urging him to use the funds to bolster the efforts of groups like Project Ignition License to Live.

As the example of Gibson City and the Arends family shows, young adults take to heart the life lessons of their peers. Therefore, Governor Blagojevich and the State of Illinois would be wise to coordinate with groups such as Project Ignition—License to Live so that young adults can share their per-

sonal experiences and remind their peers to drive safe and buckle up. I urge my fellow Senators to continue to fund these important safety programs and to work with their State governments to pass primary seatbelt laws so that other States can follow Illinois' example and make highway safety a priority.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

AIRMAN JASON J. DOYLE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I rise to express my sympathy over the loss of U.S. Navy Airman Jason Doyle of Nebraska. Airman Doyle died after falling overboard from the USS *Kitty Hawk* off the eastern coast of Japan on July 8. He was 19 years old.

Airman Doyle grew up near Sunset, UT. In 2000, he moved to Bellevue, NE and was a 2005 graduate of Papillion-La Vista South High School. He joined the Navy immediately following graduation.

Airman Doyle had a lifelong interest in flying and in Japanese culture. He turned those interests into an opportunity with the Navy. He was deployed with the Electronic Attack Squadron, VAQ, 136 aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk* in October 2005. His first leave was at a Japanese port, where he was able to experience a culture he had been fascinated with his entire life. Thousands of brave Americans like Airman Doyle are serving the United States worldwide.

Airman Doyle is survived by his father, Dale Doyle; his mother, Martha Bower; his stepmother, Susie Doyle; his brother Brandon; and sisters Shauna, Whitney, and Ashley.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Americans in honoring Airman Jason Doyle.

#### REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the National Veterans Business Development Corporation, commonly known as the Vets Corp. This bill, the Veterans Corporation Reauthorization Act of 2006, was developed in a cooperative fashion by members of the Small Business and Veterans Affairs' Committees, in conjunction with Senator TALENT who was involved in the original establishment of the Vets Corp during his tenure in the other body.

The Vets Corp has a crucial mission—to foster entrepreneurship and business opportunities for veterans, with a special focus on service-disabled veterans. During this time of conflict abroad, this mission is extremely relevant. A seamless transition from military to civilian status requires that we give our veterans the tools necessary to succeed in their post-military lives. The Vets Corp seeks to do just this for veteran-owned small businesses.